BRITISH MUSEUM

Prov. xxiv. 21.

My ſon, fear thou the Lord, and the King: and meddle not with them that are given to change.

THERE is no need that I ſhould acquaint any who are here preſent with the ſad occaſion of this anniverſary ſolemnity; nor need I, I ſuppoſe, uſe many words to raiſe in you a juſt abhorrence of that moſt execrable parricide, which we are now bewailing. To be ſure we do all of us, from the very bottom of our hearts, deteſt and abomi-

nate it; unleſs we have been all this while in this holy place prevaricating with God and man, and adding a feigned humiliation to the number of our former provocations.

As it ought to be the earneſt prayer and endeavour of all good men and loyal ſubjects, that no ſuch wickedneſs may hereafter be committed among us, to the reproach of our nation, and of the holy Religion which we profeſs: ſo is it particularly incumbent on the miniſters of the Goſpel, to preſs upon men the due obſervation of thoſe laws, which the moſt high hath enacted for the ſecurity and ſupport of his vice-gerents on earth; and to caution men againſt thoſe pernicious principles and practices, which in the laſt age brought a moſt excellent and gracious Monarch to the block; and quite overthrew our conſtitution in church and ſtate: and which in all ages, if a timely ſtop be not put to them, will produce the like tragical effects, as having a natural tendency to ſubvert government, and to introduce anarchy and confuſion amongſt mankind.

FOR which reaſon I have choſen for the ſubject of my following diſcourſe, this ſolemn charge of the wiſe King *Solomon* to his Son; *My ſon, fear thou the Lord and the King: and meddle not with them that are given to change.* In which words are bound upon us three rules of life, very neceſſary to be obſerved by all who would not be deemed enemies to the publick peace and tranquility.

The firſt is, *To fear the Lord.*

The ſecond is, *To fear the King.*

The third is, *Not to meddle with thoſe that are given to change.*

OF each of theſe injunctions I ſhall diſcourſe in order, and ſhall ſhew in what latitude, and with what reſtrictions, they are to be underſtood; how highly reaſonable they are, and of how great importance to the preſervation of human ſociety, and the maintenance of the magiſtrate's authority.

THE fear of God is a duty equally obliging perſons of all ranks and conditions, at all times, and in all places; and in its full extent comprehends all other duties. It has for its foundation, all the glorious at-

tributes and perfections of God; but more eſpecially his omniſcience, his holineſs, his juſtice, and his almighty power. For they who are firmly perſuaded, that all their actions, and words, and thoughts, are open to the view of the Deity; that [a] *he is of purer eyes than to behold evil with approbation, and cannot endure to look on iniquity*; that he will one day judge all men in righteouſneſs according to their works; and that the united force of all the creatures of the univerſe cannot hinder him from executing the terrible ſentence which he ſhall then paſs upon the tranſgreſſors of his laws; they who do, in good earneſt, believe theſe things to be true, and frequently and ſeriouſly conſider them, will of courſe be very careful not to incur the diſpleaſure of the Almighty, by doing thoſe things which he hath forbidden, or by neglecting to do what he hath commanded. Hence, in Scripture, the fear of God is often uſed to ſignify the whole of Religion: becauſe in all who live under the influence of it, it is a very powerful

[a] *Hab.* i. 13.

principle

principle of conſtant and uniform obedience to the divine laws.

THE fear of the King too comprehends the whole duty of a ſubject to his ſoveraign. To fear the King is, to yeild to him that homage, and ſubmiſſion, and obedience, which the laws of God, and of the land, do require: chearfully to contribute towards the ſupporting his royal honour and dignity, and the ſupplying the neceſſities of the ſtate; to labour every one of us in our own ſphere to defeat the expectations and contrivances of his enemies, and to promote the peace of his government, and the ſucceſs of his deſigns; and continually to pray to him who diſpoſeth of all events, to protect his perſon, to direct his counſels, and proſper his undertakings; to demean our ſelves towards him with profound reverence, to ſpeak honorably of him, to think of him with aw, to entertain the moſt favourable opinion of his character, and to put the beſt conſtruction upon his actions; and finally, to render due honour and obedience to all inferior magiſtrates and officers, who act

act by his commiſſion, and in ſubordination to him.

THE reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of all this, will appear by ſhewing, that nothing leſs than this, will fully anſwer the ends of government; and that the contrary practices are very injurious to the authority of princes, and do tend to the diſturbance and diſſolution of ſociety.

GOVERNMENT it is clear cannot ſubſiſt, where there are none who will ſubmit to be governed, and own their dependance upon their governours: there can be no ſoveraign, where there are no ſubjects; no commanders, where none will obey.

TO call any one King, and at the ſame time to rebel againſt his authority, what is this but to mock him with an empty title? And it is nearly the ſame caſe, when ſubjects, though they do not take up arms againſt their ſoveraign, do withdraw from him thoſe ſupplies without which his government cannot be upheld.

IN

IN the natural body all the members, even thoſe which are eſteemed the moſt ignoble and inconſiderable, do their office for the preſervation and well being of the whole: and in the political it is as fitting that all the members, even thoſe which are in a private ſtation, ſhould, as their circumſtances will allow them, exert themſelves for the ſecurity and proſperity of the whole community. The protection which the authority of the magiſtrate affords to all, lays an obligation upon all to unite in the defence of it againſt the attempts of its enemies, which ſometimes can no otherwiſe be repelled than by the united endeavours of all. It gives great encouragement to the adverſaries of a ſtate to obſerve, that thoſe who do not ſide with them, are not very hearty and diligent againſt them. The government that is negligently defended, will quickly be vigorouſly aſſaulted; and with too great probability of ſucceſs, when even its friends ſhew no other mark of friendſhip to it, than the forbearing to join with its enemies.

THE

THE obſtructions and difficulties, with which the management of the publick affairs is neceſſarily attended, are ſo many and ſo great, that the ſoveraign has need of all the aſſiſtance his ſubjects can lend him for the removing them. Should they induſtriouſly lay unneceſſary ones in his way, his deſigns for their ſafety and benefit, muſt in all likelyhood miſcarry.

THEY who can be helpful no other way, have ſurely great reaſon to ſollicit heaven, to guard, and guide, and aſſiſt thoſe who are continually watching for their welfare. And ſince without the divine aid all human counſels and labours are vain; they who can be moſt ſerviceable to their ſoveraign by their wiſdom, or valour, or treaſure, muſt by no means think themſelves excuſed from aſſiſting him by their earneſt and conſtant prayers. And if thoſe, who barely omit this duty, are not to be accounted good ſubjects; they are certainly very bad ones, who dare to imprecate the judgments of heaven upon their governours.

IRRE-

IRREVERENT carriage to the perſon of the prince, and the ſpeaking contemptuouſly and diſhonourably of him, have a direct tendency to leſſen his people's veneration for him, which is a main prop of his government. The ſpeaking evil of princes, is commonly a prelude to ſome attempt againſt them; it being found by experience, that the way to weaken and undermine their authority, is to blaſt their reputation. Many perhaps, who are inſtrumental in ſpreading ſcandalous reports of their governours, have no ſuch wicked intention; but if they have not, they are certainly very ſerviceable to thoſe that have; nor are they to be excus'd who liſten and give credit to them. Such, tho' at preſent they are not active in carrying on any traiterous deſigns, yet give grounds to hope that they may be wrought upon, and in time made fit for purpoſes, to which, as yet they are, ſtrangers. When once men have caſt off all inward awe of their prince, and have given entertainment to an ill opinion of him; they are then ve-

ry much expoſed to the attacks of diſcontented and factious perſons.

BEFORE ſubjects credit evil reports of their prince, they ought to conſider that it is the employment of many, to render him either contemptible or odious to his people: that to this end many falſe things are laid to his charge, his real defects and miſcarriages are very much magnified; the ill ſucceſs of his undertakings is charged upon his miſmanagement, tho' perhaps no diligence nor vigilance, nor providence (ſo far as it is in man's power to provide againſt contingencies) was wanting on his part; and his very beſt deſigns, laid and conducted with the greateſt wiſdom, and perfected with all deſireable ſucceſs, are repreſented as prejudicial and pernicious to the common-weal. And they who can ſuffer their affections to be by thoſe means alienated from their preſent ſoveraign, will not be long pleaſed with any: nor can any government be quiet, or ſecure, where theſe artifices are practiſed with ſucceſs.

THE

THE authority of the ſupreme magiſtrate muſt of neceſſity be exerciſed by many ſubordinate officers: and to diſhonour or diſobey theſe, is, in effect, to diſhonour and diſobey him, by whoſe commiſſion they act. And tho' it be for the intereſt of the publick, that they ſhould account for wilful abuſes of the power committed to them; yet all unreaſonable clamours againſt them, are of dangerous conſequence to the government, and do indeed threaten the ſoveraign himſelf, who may be mortally wounded thro' the ſides of his miniſters.

IT has been before obſerved, that the laws of God, and of the land, are the meaſures of ſubmiſſion and obedience to the King. Wherefore no one ought, from what has been now ſaid, to infer, that in limited monarchies, where part of the legiſlative authority is lodged in the body of the people, the ſubjects are obliged to obey any edicts of the prince not agreeble to the laws enacted by the whole legiſlature. In this caſe, ſince the power of the people is ſo far coordinate with

that of the prince, that without them no new laws can be enacted, nor former laws abrogated; they may juſtly require to be governed by the laws made with their own conſent, and by no other. And ſhould this right of the people be ſet aſide, and no redreſs obtained upon their humble petitions and repreſentations; the prince muſt take to himſelf the blame, if they have recourſe to other means abſolutely neceſſary for the preſervation of their conſtitution. On the other hand, it is incumbent on the people to ſee, that their grievances are real, and not pretended; that their complaints are founded not upon meer ſurmiſes and jealouſes, but upon notorious facts; and that while they are aſſerting their own right, they do not invade that of their ſoveraign, nor make any thing matter of demand, but the reſtoring and ſecuring to them what is their due, by laws already eſtabliſhed.

MOREOVER, ſince God is the ſupreme Monarch of the univerſe, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; ſince his

his power alone is unlimited and irreſiſtible; and by conſequence, the primary and moſt proper object of men's fear; it is manifeſt, that no human laws whatſoever, can bind men to act contrary to the divine. Nothing can be more unreaſonable, than to obey God's vice-gerent in oppoſition to God himſelf, and to ſuffer the fear of a leſs power, to prevail againſt the fear of a greater. The text teaches us, in the firſt place, *to fear the Lord*, and then *the King*. Should the King command not to fear the Lord, it is better to endure all that he can inflict, than to do what he commands? We are indeed commanded [a], *to render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſars*; but we cannot without impiety withhold from *God the things that are Gods*: that we may render to *Cæſar* more than is his due. The Apoſtles, when they were reprimanded by the high-prieſt for not obeying the charge given them by the *Sanhedrim*, to teach no more in the

[a] *Matt.* xxii. 21.

name

name of Jeſus, anſwered plainly, that they [a] *ought to obey God rather than man.* And a diſciple of St. *John* being brought before the magiſtrate for Chriſt's name ſake, anſwered to the ſame purpoſe; "[b] We are taught to pay to the powers "and authorities ordained of God, all "due honour, excepting ſuch only as would "be hurtful to us." For to Chriſtians, that honour and obedience muſt needs appear hurtful, which, tho' it may ſcreen them from the diſpleaſure of an earthly governour, who can kill the body only, will draw upon them the wrath of God, who can deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell.

BUT tho' the fear of God muſt, in caſe of competition, take place, before the fear of the King; yet ought it not to be made a pretence for refuſing to render to the King the fear which is owing to him. The fear of God is ſo far from releaſing ſubjects from their duty

[a] *Acts* v. 29. [b] *Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. 4. cap. 15.

to

to their prince, that it is the ſureſt ground of it, and the ſtrongeſt motive to it. For ſince the King is the miniſter of God; they who do indeed fear God, will of courſe fear him who is in the place of God, and acts by authority derived from him. And whatſoever honour or ſervice they are to yield to him, they will yield it heartily, not as to a man, but as to him whom he repreſents, the all-ſeeing and all-powerful God.

To ſuch men human laws have a much ſtronger ſanction, than the penalties annexed to the violation of them by the legiſlature. They are ſubject for fear, not only of the magiſtrates wrath, but of that everlaſting puniſhment, which God will inflict upon all who will not ſubmit to the powers ordained by him.

The firmeſt and moſt inviolable ingagement by which ſubjects can oblige themſelves to be faithful to a government, is a ſolemn oath, which is render'd effectual to its end by the fear of God, who is therein invocated as a witneſs to the ſincerity of the ſwearer's intention,

and

and as the avenger of his perfidiouſneſs ſhould he break through ſo ſacred a tye.

BUT to thoſe who have no awe of this omniſcient witneſs, no dread of this almighty avenger, no oaths will be binding any longer, than they are agreeable to their inclination. And it will be their inclination to do every thing with a view to worldly advantages. The ground and meaſure of their obedience to the prince, will be their ſecular intereſt; the variation of which will be apt to produce an anſwerable change in the conduct. For they will have no motive to loyalty left, when they may turn rebels with impunity, and be gainers by an alteration of governnment.

BUT the fear of God being always the ſame, is a very ſteady principle of loyalty. It ſecures the obedience of ſubjects in many caſes, where the laws either do not reach them, or cannot be executed upon them; and keeps them true to the intereſt of their ſoveraign, when other conſiderations might induce them

to betray or deſert it. Even they who would perſuade us that there is no ſuch being as God, or if there be, that he obſerves not what paſſes here below, cannot but own that the fear of him is a principle very friendly to government, and of great uſe to diſpoſe men to be peaceable and ſubmiſſive to thoſe who are in authority.

THE more inexcuſable were the actors in this days horrid tragedy, who made the fear of God the cloak of treaſon; and in direct contradiction to the precept of St. *Peter*, ſet themſelves to reſiſt[a] *every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake*, turning faith into faction, and religion into rebellion: who under a ſpecious pretext of reforming the Church, filled their native country with blood and deſolation, trampled upon its laws, and triumphed in the ruin of its conſtitution: who faſted and prayed, not for the ſafety of the King, and all that were in authority, that under them they might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſ-

[a] 1 *Pet.* ii. 13.

ty; but for ſtrife and debate, and to ſtir up ſedition and inſurrection againſt thoſe whom God had ſet over them: who, profeſſing a mighty reverence for the divine majeſty, ruſhed upon the moſt abominable perjuries; firſt of all violating the oaths which they had taken to the King and eſtabliſhed government, by entring into illegal covenants and engagements, and illegally impoſing them upon others; and then breaking looſe from theſe alſo, when they were no longer for their turn: who, with a ſhew of more than ordinary ſanctity and concern for the honour of God, practiſed all the diabolical arts of defamation and calumny againſt his image and repreſentative; and not contented with ſlandering the foot-ſteps of the Lord's anointed, and blackening his character, deprived him of his royal dignity, barbarouſly inſulted his ſacred perſon, and at length imbrued their hands in the blood of a king, who was an illuſtrious example to his ſubjects of genuine piety and ſobriety, and meekneſs and patience, and all other chriſtian vertues: who laſtly pro-

proceeded to this high pitch of diſloyalty and impiety, when all grievances had been long ago redreſſed, and the King had paſſed ſuch acts, as will be everlaſting monuments of his fatherly affection and tenderneſs for his people; when he had to the great prejudice of his own intereſts granted ſeveral things, which his ſubjects could not with juſtice demand, nor ask with any degree of modeſty; nay, when he had conſented to part with the beſt and moſt conſiderable branches of his royal authority, and to leave to himſelf little more than the title of a King: in doing which, as he went beyond the example of his predeceſſors, ſo it is to be hoped he will never be followed by any of his ſucceſſors.

BUT tho' the fear of God was the pretended inducement to all theſe villanies; yet nothing can be more certain than that they are truly to be aſcribed to the want of it. Wherefore none ought to caſt of a principle abſolutely neceſſary to the very being of government, meerly becauſe the external profeſſion

of it has been abuſed to the worſt Purpoſes by crafty and ill-deſigning men, who were deſtitute of the inward power of it. On the contrary, it is our duty not to let it reſt upon the ſurface of our tongues, but to give it admittance into our breaſts, and to implant it deeply in our hearts; and then it will not fail to bring forth the fruits of peaceableneſs and ſubmiſſion, of obedience and loyalty to the Government under which the merciful providence of almighty God hath placed us; and to reſtrain us from all ſeditious and traiterous practices, and from all approaches towards them. For they who would avoid any Crime, muſt be careful to avoid the ſteps that lead to it. For which reaſon the wiſe king to keep his ſon from engaging in deſigns againſt the State directs him not to meddle with Changers, or, according to our tranſlation, *with them that are given to change.*

IN which direction, it was not the intention of king *Solomon*, to condemn all changes in the laws and government of a kingdom. The ſupreme power, which in

in every independent State, is lodged ſomewhere or other, manifeſtly implies a power to make ſuch alterations as ſhall from time to time be judg'd convenient and advantageous. And in the different circumſtances of the publick affairs, ſome changes in the laws will be often neceſſary, or very expedient; and when they are made by ſufficient authority, it is without controverſy the duty of ſubjects to ſubmit to them. And even private perſons, when the preſent laws of their country are very inconvenient and prejudicial to the intereſts of the people, may lawfully deſire an alteration of them, and may commendably endeavour to effect it in a legal manner, by making humble and dutiful application to thoſe who are veſted with the legiſlative power.

BUT they are changers in the bad ſenſe of the word, who go about to change the laws and ſettled government of a nation, without the conſent of thoſe who have authority to do it; or who by illegal and violent methods endeavour to extort the conſent of their governours to ſuch alte-

terations as they ſhall propoſe; as by clamours and menaces and tumultuous aſſemblies; by forming ſecret conſpiracies, or by openly bearing arms againſt their ſoveraign, and by entring into covenants, not to lay down their arms, till they have obtained their unjuſt demands. They too who by any kind of diſloyal Behaviour, or ſeditious diſcourſe, manifeſt their averſion to the eſtabliſhed government, may with reaſon be ſuſpected of being given to change; altho' it be not yet their avowed deſign to effect a change.

BY forbidding us to meddle with them that are given to change, King *Solomon* would reſtrain us, not only from acting in concert with them, and aſſiſting them in carrying on their miſchievous deſigns; but alſo from engaging in friendſhip and familiarity, or any unneceſſary correſpondence with them.

IT is no eaſy matter, to converſe much with men of a factious and turbulent ſpirit, without being infected by them. The beſt way to preſerve ourſelves, both from their crime and their puniſhmenr,

is

is to keep at a diſtance from them. And this I take to be the true meaning of the wiſe man's advice, in the xxii. Chapter of this book of *Proverbs*, at the 24th, and 25th verſes, *Make no friendſhip with an angry man, and with a furious man thou ſhalt not go. Leſt thou learn his ways, and get a ſnare to thy ſoul.* By often hearkening to the plauſible diſcourſes of ſeditious perſons, utter'd with a ſeeming concern for the publick welfare, many come at length to approve of them, and highly to eſteem thoſe who make them, for their great underſtanding, and honeſty, and diſintereſted zeal for the good of their country; and to believe that their governours are not ſo good as they ought to be, and that ſome changes for the better are both poſſible and needful. And they who have got thus far, will be too apt to be prevailed upon, to take ſome unlawful ſteps towards the reforming of ſuppoſed diſorders, without imagining what purpoſes they are ſerving, and how far their leaders intend to carry them. And when men are once engaged, they themſelves

ſelves cannot tell where they ſhall ſtop. One wickedneſs may introduce them to another, till they become principal actors in the execution of deſigns, with which they could not have been ſafely truſted at their firſt ſetting out.

PUT the caſe, that the main ſecret when revealed to them ſhould diſpleaſe them; yet after a conſiderable progreſs in unlawful courſes, it will be very difficult for them to retreat. The ſhame of acknowledging themſelves to have been in the wrong, the apprehenſion of being reproached for deſerting their companions, and the fear of ſuffering puniſhment for having accompanied them ſo far, will be ſtrong temptations to them to proceed farther againſt the bent of their own inclinations, and the convictions of their conſciences.

Should they, notwithſtanding theſe temptations to the contrary, reſolve to be no longer directed by thoſe who miſled them; yet what they have already done, may have conſequences fatal to the publick. By their aſſiſtance, the enemies of the govern-

government, may be grown ſtrong enough to compaſs their ends, not only without their farther concurrence, but in ſpite of all the oppoſition they can make. And it will then be a mortifying conſideration to reflect, that they have been acceſſory to villanies which they abhor, of which, however they muſt be content to bear the blame. The criminal aſſiſtance which they gave to men worſe than themſelves, will entitle them to a ſhare in their guilt; and they will be in ſome meaſure anſwerable for the unforeſeen conſequences of their unlawful practices.

And yet the beſt and honeſteſt thing, which perſons thus entangl'd can do, is to get rid of their bad company as ſoon as poſſible, to be ſorry for what miſchief they have already done, and to endeavour, by their future conduct, to make reparation for it. And the deſign of what has been now ſaid, was not to diſcourage any from forbearing to meddle any longer with them that are given to change, but to perſuade all who are as yet innocent, never to meddle with them at all,

but induſtriouſly to avoid them; not to paſs by their path, but to *turn from them and paſs away* [a]. *For they ſleep not, except they have done miſchief, and their ſleep is taken away, unleſs they cauſe ſome to fall.* Wherefore they cannot be too diligently guarded againſt, by thoſe who would preſerve themſelves not only from guilt, but from trouble and perplexity and ignominy, and from that calamity and ruin, which (as we are informed by the verſe following my text) *ſhall come ſuddenly upon them that are given to change, and upon thoſe who meddle with them.*

THE unparallel'd treaſon committed on this day, and all the confuſions and miſeries preceding it, and conſequent upon it, may juſtly be aſcribed to the neglect of this moſt neceſſary caution. Indeed it can hardly be doubted, but that from the beginning of thoſe unhappy troubles, or very ſoon after, there was a party of deſperate men, who had in view

[a] *Prov.* iv. 14, 15.

the utter ſubverſion of the eſtabliſh'd government, and were reſolved to ſtick at no villany that might conduce to the accompliſhing their end. But their numbers in thoſe early days, were much too ſmall to bring about the change they aim'd at, or even to protect them from the juſt vengeance which the nation would certainly have taken upon them, had they then dar'd to own their intentions. Wherefore they found it neceſſary to cover their real deſigns, under the ſpecious pretences of remeding abuſes, and ſecuring the liberties of the people, and rectifying what was amiſs both in church and ſtate.

By this artifice, multitudes of undiſcerning and unwary people, were drawn into their aſſiſtance, and to a criminal union with them, and when theſe inſtruments of theirs had for a conſiderable time been accuſtomed to traduce the King and his miniſters, exceedingly to aggravate the errors they had committed, and to charge them with odious deſigns, which they knew nothing of, to brand all who honeſtly adher'd to the King and the an-

cient conſtitution, with names and characters of reproach, and to terrify them not only by threatnings, but by outrages and tumults; when they had broken forth into open rebellion againſt their ſoveraign, and in contradiction to the lawful oaths, which they were under to him, had bound themſelves by unlawful covenants and aſſociations, not to reſt till they had compelled him to comply with ſuch alterations as they judged expedient; when they had laid waſt their country, and ſhed much chriſtian blood in their unjuſt quarrel, and had ſeveral times rejected the gracious overtures of peace made to them by the King, when by theſe means the breach between him and them was ſo widen'd, that it was hardly poſſible to compoſe it upon conditions ſafe and honourable to them both; when by long familiarity, with diſloyalty and treaſon, the conſciences of great numbers of men, were harden'd, and grown perfectly inſenſible; and when the enemies of the King had got into their hands the whole power of the nation, and his friends could no lon-

longer make head againſt them; then was it a proper time for the contrivers and directors of all this miſchief, to diſcover to thoſe who had been ſubſervient to them their true deſigns againſt the perſon and government of the King. And doubtleſs there were many concurring and aſſiſting to the monſtrous wickedneſs, the puniſhment of which, we do this day deprecate, who, had it been propos'd to them ſome years before, would have been ſtruck with horror at the mention of it, and who could no otherwiſe have been made capable of committing it, than by being artfully trailed on, ſtep by ſtep, from the meddling with them that are given to change, to the becoming ſuch themſelves, from one perjury to another perjury, and from leſs treaſons to greater.

It is true too, that many who had been active, both in kindling and proſecuting the war, were ſtartl'd at the unprecedented proceedings againſt the perſon of the King, and publickly expreſs'd their diſlike of them. But fruitleſs proteſtations were but pitiful compenſations

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for the ſucceſsful ſervices they had done to his murtherers, whom they had continued to aſſiſt and ſtrengthen, till it was to no purpoſe to make oppoſition to them. It was then out of their power to undo the miſchiefs which they had been the authors of, or to hinder others from making a farther uſe of them, than they themſelves had intended. Thus were they unawares made inſtrumental to the ſhedding the innocent and ſacred blood of their ſoveraign; the guilt of which horrible deed muſt be imputed not only to thoſe who were immediately concerned in it, and conſenting to it, but in a lower degree to thoſe alſo, who made way for it, by the unwarrantable practices, which have been already mentioned.

THE greater reaſon have we, brethren, to be exceeding careful not to tread in their ſteps, leſt we alſo fall in like manner as they fell. Their miſcarriages are our admonitions, and we ſhall be more inexcuſable than they, if inſtead of taking warning by them, we follow their example.

I AM ſenſible it will be ſaid, That we do imitate them, at the ſame time that we blame them; that the prayers which we have now offered for the averting the divine wrath due to the ſin of this day, and for the ſafety and proſperity of our preſent gracious ſoveraign, are a contradiction to one another; and that the late revolution was a return to the principles of thoſe who were concerned in the great rebellion. And there are two ſorts of men, who, tho' oppoſite enough to each other, will be apt to concur in making this objection: the one with a deſign to juſtify the murther of the Royal Martyr, or at leaſt the meaſures which prepared the way for it; the other with an intention to condemn the happy revolution, upon which our preſent ſettlement is founded.

NOW, to what hath been already obſerved, with a view to this objection, I need only to add, That theſe two caſes, which ſome would fain have us believe to be nearly alike, are widely different.

IT is well known, That the rebellion againſt King *Charles* the firſt was begun, when all grievances (which in his reign were far from amounting to a total ſubverſion of the conſtitution) had been fully redreſſed and repaired. And it was the declared reſolution of thoſe who engaged in it, not to defend, but to change the laws and ſettled form of government, and to encroach upon the juſt rights of their ſoveraign; who laboured indefatigably to maintain the eſtabliſhed laws and government; who by the laws, to which he had without compulſion conſented, had given ſufficient proof, that he was as willing to ſecure his peoples rights as his own; and who was ſo far from affecting power, that did not belong to him, that his greateſt weakneſs was, that he did not hold faſt the rains of government in his hands, but parted with his authority too eaſily, and made too large conceſſions to thoſe who were not diſpoſed to make him ſuitable returns. When the rebels had got the maſtery, they then actually compleated a far greater change, than they had

had at first professed to desire. A high court of justice was erected for the judging and condemning the King himself as a criminal; the whole royal family were excluded from succeeding to the crown; and kingly government itself was declared against and abolished, and several illegal forms of government were one after another set up in the room of it.

BUT in the reign of the late King *James*, no redress of grievances, no opportunity of redressing them in a parliamentary way, could be obtained. Instead of being removed they were justified by pretending, that the King had a power to dispense with the laws at pleasure. And it was very visible that the King and his ministers governed by this pernicious and tyrannical maxim. Now this was plainly a subversion of the constitution, by changing the government from limited to absolute, from legal to arbitrary. When the power of the people prevailed, they made it very evident, that the motive to the measures they had then taken was necessity, and not the being given to

change. No remedy was ſo much as ſought for againſt the perſon of the King. No prejudice was manifeſted againſt the illuſtrious family, which had long ſwayed the ſcepter of theſe kingdoms: but all poſſible regard was ſhewn to it. The King himſelf had render'd the ſetting of the crown upon a perſon who now pretends to it impracticable; tho' the nation had been ever ſo well ſatisfied concerning his birth. But it was immediately ſettled upon the King's undoubted iſſue then in the kingdom, and upon a grandſon of the Royal Martyr; and afterwards, in default of the iſſue from them, upon the next branch of the royal family profeſſing the Proteſtant Religion; with whom alone our conſtitution could with any proſpect of ſecurity be entruſted. Nor was there any invaſion of the royal prerogative; but the ſame government in church and ſtate was chearfully ſubmitted to by the people; as on the other hand the liberties of the people were faithfully defended by the crown. In ſhort, of two changes, one of which

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was at that time unavoidable, the nation preferred the leſs to the greater, and that which was ſafe and advantageous to that which would have been very diſadvantageous and deſtructive.

WHICH things conſidered, no man ſhould offer to draw a parallel betwixt the late Revolution and the great rebellion, till he is able to demonſtrate, That there is no difference between the doing no manner of hurt to the perſon of the King, and the executing him publickly as a malefactor; between the ſettling the crown upon his undoubted iſſue, and excluding the whole royal family from it without any other neceſſity than what aroſe from the guilt of thoſe who excluded them; between the peoples aſſerting their own undoubted rights, and their invading the undoubted rights of their ſoveraign; between inſiſting upon the regular obſervation and execution of the eſtabliſhed laws, and fighting for an alteration of them; between preſerving the ancient conſtitution and utterly overthrowing it from the foundations; or in o-

ther words, between juſt and unjuſt; between right and wrong.

WHEREFORE, Brethren, let us ſtop our ears againſt thoſe, whoſe doctrines open a door to diſobedience and rebellion againſt lawful authority; and no leſs againſt thoſe alſo who would inſinuate that our preſent governours have no claim to the ſubmiſſion, which they acknowledge to be due to lawful magiſtrates. The powers which now are, are ordained of God; and ordained in mercy to us, for the ſecurity of our lives and properties and liberties, and of what we ought to value above all the reſt, our moſt holy Religion. And heavy will be the condemnation of thoſe, who ſhall refuſe to ſubmit to him who is the miniſter of God to them for good.

LET us therefore, laying aſide all pride and contentions, all jealouſies and diſcontents, ſet our ſelves to perform what we know to be our duty to him who is veſted with the authority of God: not with eye-ſervice as men-pleaſers, not with murmurings as of neceſſity, but in ſingleneſs

ſingleneſs of heart and with a ready mind, as in the ſight of God, as having his fear before our eyes, and remembring that he will bring us to a ſtrict account not only for the ſins committed immediately againſt himſelf, but for every offence againſt his ſubſtitute, who by him reigns and decrees juſtice.

IF we dread not the penalties of human laws; yet let us revere the ordinance of God. Let us conſider by whom we have ſworn; and let deſtruction from him be a terror to us. If there be any who dare bid defiance to that; let us mark ſuch and turn away from them. Let us not be ſo weak as to imagine that they can have any real concern for religion, or the intereſt of their country, who can prevail with themſelves, or would prevail with others, to violate the oath of God. We cannot ſurely be at a loſs to conclude, what kind of ſpirits have taken poſſeſſion of thoſe men, who are not to be bound, no not with chains; who break in ſunder the ſtrongeſt bonds of go-

government, and caſt away its cords from them.

LET our behaviour be ſuitable to our profeſſions on this ſolemn day of humiliation. If we do indeed deteſt the crimes of thoſe cruel and unreaſonable men who gave occaſion for the obſervance of it; if we would not for the world be the authors of ſuch dreadful calamities as they by a long train of wickedneſs brought upon their nation; if we are ſincere in imploring the mercy of God, that he would not viſit their guilt upon us or our poſterity: let us take heed that we do not fill up the meaſure of their iniquities by a repetition of them: let us not cheriſh the ſeeds which are apt to produce ſuch bitter and deadly fruits: let us not enter upon courſes, which, for ought we know, may end in the crimes we deteſt.

TO conclude, let us not ſeparate what God hath joyned together, religion and loyalty, the fear of God and of the King. Let us eſteem loyalty as a neceſſary part

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of Religion, and aſſure ourſelves that we are doing God acceptable ſervice while we are ſerving his repreſentative. Let loyalty to the King mingle itſelf with our moſt ſolemn acts of divine worſhip. In our thankſgivings let us devoutly acknowledge the many bleſſings we enjoy under his government: and in return let us by our prayers draw down the choiceſt bleſſings of heaven upon him; moſt earneſtly beſeeching the Almighty to enrich him plenteouſly with grace here, and crown him with everlaſting glory hereafter; to prolong his life in health and wealth, and to perpetuate his ſeed as the days of heaven; to guide him with his ſpirit of councel, and to ſtrengthen him with his mighty arm, for the eſtabliſhment of truth, and the maintenance of juſtice, both at home and abroad; to hide him in time of danger under the covert of his wings, and to ſhield him with his ſtrong ſalvation; that the conſpiracies formed againſt him may not proſper, and the devices of wicked men may be

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turned backwards and light upon their own heads; that all the people may hear and fear to do wickedly, and the crown may flouriſh upon the head of the Lord's Anointed.

F I N I S.

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GOD's Compassion to an ungrateful People.

Consider'd in a

SERMON

The SUBSTANCE of which was Preach'd at

The Rev. Mr. RIDGLEY's MEETING-PLACE NEAR Thames-Street,

April the Sixth, 1732.

By SAMUEL WILSON.

LONDON:

Printed for AARON WARD, at the King's-Arms, and JOHN OSWALD, at the Rose and Crown, in Little-Britain; and RICHARD HETT, at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry. M.DCC.XXXII.

[Price Sixpence.]